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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children
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Participation of children and adolescents in the special session of the General Assembly on children and in its preparatory process

Note by the Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee

I. Background

1. In resolution 54/93, paragraph 5, the General Assembly "recognizes the importance of a participatory process at the national, regional and international levels with a view, inter alia, to establishing partnerships between a broad range of actors, including children and youth, in order to raise momentum for children's rights and needs".

2. In resolution 55/26, the Assembly reiterates the above and, in paragraph 11, "highlights the important role of children and youth in this process and, in this regard, encourages States to facilitate and promote their active contribution to the preparatory process, including the Preparatory Committee, and the special session".

3. In line with these resolutions, a number of Governments and non-governmental organizations have promoted the participation of children and adolescents in national and regional events related to the special session and its preparatory process. Also, several Governments and non-governmental organizations included, in their delegations to the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee (30 May-2 June 2000), young people who had an opportunity to participate in the formal meetings as well as in various side events. It should be noted that there is no legal age limit for governmental delegates to the United Nations.

4. A number of Governments and non-governmental organizations have indicated their intention to include children and adolescents in their delegations to the second substantive session of the Committee. A special pre-session workshop has been organized to brief children and adolescents who participate as governmental or delegates of non-governmental organizations in the second substantive session and to facilitate an exchange of views on the substantive issues of the session.

5. Against this background and on the basis of various suggestions from Governments and non-governmental organizations, the following proposals are put forward to facilitate the discussion on how fully to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly quoted above.

II. Inclusion of children and adolescents in delegations

6. Member States and non-governmental organizations are encouraged to continue to include or

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to consider including children and adolescents as active members of their delegations to the meetings of the Preparatory Committee and to the special session itself.

III. Participation in the Preparatory Committee

7. An opportunity could be given to child and adolescent delegates from Governments and non-governmental organizations to share their views on the draft outcome document during the formal meetings of the Committee, as part of their delegations.

IV. Participation in the special session

8. A forum for children and adolescents, including young delegates from Governments and non-governmental organizations attending the special session, could be organized prior to the special session in order to enable the children, adolescents and young delegates to exchange views on the subjects concerning them. The outcome of the youth forum could be presented orally to the plenary of the special session by a representative or representatives nominated by the forum.

9. A round table designed for a dialogue between child and adolescent delegates and Heads of State or Government attending the special session could be held during the special session. The Heads of State or Government would be invited to discuss with child and adolescent delegates a theme to be determined by the Preparatory Committee, based on suggestions by children and adolescents.

V. Support from the United Nations Children's Fund

10. In collaboration with Governments and non-governmental organizations with experience and expertise in children and adolescents' participation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) would:

(a) Inform and brief interested delegations on practical aspects of children and adolescents' participation in the Preparatory Committee and in the special session itself;

(b) Prepare a "guide" for children and adolescents on the preparatory process of the special session, including its documentation;

(c) Facilitate any other logistical matter concerning children and adolescents' participation in the special session and its preparatory process.